

COINAGE OF JOHN FITZGERALD KENNEDY 50-CENT PIECES

DECEMBER 13, 1963.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the
State of the Union and ordered to be printed

Mr. PATMAN, from the Committee on Banking and Currency,
submitted the following

R E P O R T

[To accompany H.R. 9413]

The Committee on Banking and Currency, to whom was referred the bill (H.R. 9413) to provide for the coinage of 50-cent pieces bearing the likeness of John Fitzgerald Kennedy, having considered the same, report favorably thereon without amendment and recommend that the bill do pass.

PURPOSE OF THE BILL

The purpose of H.R. 9413 is to honor the memory of the late President of the United States, John Fitzgerald Kennedy.

On December 10, 1963, President Johnson sent a message to Congress requesting this legislation, saying:

I strongly recommend the enactment of this proposed legislation at the earliest possible date in order that the likeness of President Kennedy will appear on the 50-cent coins issued at the beginning of the calendar year 1964.¹

H.R. 9413, introduced on the same day by the chairman of your committee, is the same as the legislation proposed by President Johnson's message.

The committee concurs with the view that the bill should be enacted speedily, in order that 50-cent coins issued at the beginning of the calendar year 1964 will bear the likeness of President Kennedy.

The bill directs that there shall be coined a 50-cent piece which shall bear on one side the likeness of John Fitzgerald Kennedy, and on the other side an appropriate design to be prescribed by the Secretary of the Treasury.

¹ H. Doc. 181, 88th Cong., 1st sess.

The consent of the Congress is required to make this change in view of the provisions of section 3510 of the Revised Statutes, as amended (31 U.S.C. 276), which provides that no change in the design of a coin shall be made oftener than once in 25 years. The present design was adopted in 1948.

It should be said that since President Kennedy's death the committee has received a large number of communications from citizens urging that a coin of one denomination or another be minted to bear the likeness of the late President, and many Members of the House, including members of the committee, have introduced bills or resolutions for this purpose. The committee considered and adopted H.R. 9413 in order to carry out the request of President Johnson.

Coins of lesser denominations than the 50-cent piece currently being minted all bear likenesses of former Presidents: The one-cent pieces, Abraham Lincoln; the nickel, Thomas Jefferson; the dime, Franklin Delano Roosevelt; and the quarter, George Washington. In contrast, the current 50-cent piece, first issued in 1948, carries the likeness of Benjamin Franklin; and the last minted silver dollar carries the image of a woman's head symbolizing "Liberty."

Under the statute of 1792, all gold and silver coins (not 1-cent pieces and nickels) must carry on the reverse side the image of an eagle. And under the law of July 11, 1955, all coins must carry the legend "In God We Trust."

The Director of the Mint informs us that the total cost of converting to the new 50-cent piece will be less than \$1,000, as the patterns are already in possession of the mint and new dies must be made in any case, and only the cost of making a master die will be involved. The Department of the Treasury has recommended enactment of H.R. 9413 as is stated in a letter of December 12 from the General Counsel of the Treasury as follows:

DECEMBER 12, 1963.

HON. WRIGHT PATMAN,
Chairman, Committee on Banking and Currency,
House of Representatives,
Washington, D.C.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: Reference is made to your request for the views of this Department on H.R. 9413, to provide for the coinage of 50-cent pieces bearing the likeness of John Fitzgerald Kennedy.

The proposed legislation would authorize the coinage of a silver 50-cent piece bearing the likeness of the late President of the United States, John Fitzgerald Kennedy, in lieu of the coinage of the 50-cent piece known as the Franklin half dollar.

The proposed legislation incorporates a draft bill submitted by the President to the Congress on December 10, 1963. The Treasury Department recommends the enactment of H.R. 9413.

The Department has been advised by the Bureau of the Budget that there is no objection to the submission of this report to your committee and that enactment of the proposed legislation would be in accord with the program of the President.

Sincerely yours,

G. D'ANDELOT BELIN,
General Counsel.

H.R. 9413 was unanimously adopted by the committee on December 12, 1963.